

Equity Access Winter Update

Sometimes just trying something new can be enough of a hurdle to keep me from going. I want someone show me the way or how to use the equipment so I feel more comfortable and confident.

It took me a long time to strap on a pair of snowshoes, but I really enjoyed it once I did. Snowshoes enable you to walk on top of the snow even when it is quite deep. And with short legs I had to work hard to not trip myself up. But once you get the hang of it, it opens up a whole new outdoor world. You can walk in places you would never consider walking during the winter.

Winter can be a great time to explore new and different types of outdoor recreation. Our local parks offer ice skating, snowshoe trails, cross country ski trails, sledding and more! Being excited to encourage more people to get outside during winter, the Four Lakes Group is teaming up with Dane County Parks to host a winter gear day on Saturday, January 22nd at Lake Farm County Park.

Winter Gear Day, Saturday, January 22nd

What's a winter gear day? A day to have some great winter fun outdoors where you can try snowshoeing and learn about winter camping and ice fishing. Bring your own cross-country skis and explore the park's trails. You can also take a walk with family or friends and find all the items on our winter scavenger hunt list (eyes and camera only!)

Volunteers needed! If you have winter activities experience or would like to help with this event, **please sign up via the [event link](#) on our Four Lakes website calendar** or contact Liz Wessel, 608-238-9934.

Dane County Budget Amendment - \$500,000 to improve county public lands access

We are excited by the budget amendment introduced by Supervisor Michele Ritt, Chair of the Environment, Agriculture & Natural Resources Committee. Supervisor Ritt has been a special ed teacher and understands the limitations and challenges for individuals to get to, as well as enjoy and recreate, in places. The funds are for projects that improve "accessibility and enjoyment of Dane County Parks, waters, and lands for persons of all abilities."

Supervisor Ritt sees this as a first step to make parks, public lands and waters more accessible. An assessment of who is and is not using the county's parks and the Zoo, and why will be completed mid-summer, providing direction for next steps.

continued on page 3

Chair's Column

Mary Reames, Co-Chair

Happy New Year, from the Four Lakes Group of the Sierra Club!

We are kicking off the year by welcoming two new board members, Jake Johnson and Patrick Stoffel! Ronda and I and the other members of the Executive Committee are looking forward to working with them. Though we are losing Dave Blouin as a board member, he'll still be around, helping out with elections issues and other matters.

I've never been much good at making (and keeping!) New Year's resolutions, but this year, I have made a few I will gladly keep that I would like to share with you in hopes you will join me to:

1. Spend more time outside in 2022.

Wisconsin is such a beautiful state. Our state, county, and municipal parks are treasures waiting to be discovered. The Four Lakes Group Equity Access team is working hard to make sure everyone is able to visit them. If you are interested in joining this effort, please contact Liz Wessel at lizard59sc@yahoo.com.

2. Take political action.

2022 is a crucial year for Wisconsin politics. To keep our nation and state on the right track, we will have to push to get and keep people in office who will support climate action, equity, and public health. The Sierra Club will be

continued on page 2

In This Issue

<i>Equity Access Winter Update</i>	1
<i>Chair's Column</i>	1
<i>Costs of Carbon</i>	2
<i>Volunteer Opportunity - Writer/editor</i>	2
<i>Transit Equity Day</i>	3
<i>Four Lakes Group Contacts</i>	3
<i>Garden Expo</i>	4

Costs of Carbon

For some time, coal was like it – and lump it! Utilities now seem convinced life is a gas. Pipeline companies likewise remain dedicated to building new pipelines.

Fossil fuel reliance is not consistent with a livable future. This past year, western droughts caused major agriculture impacts and water constraints, and horrific wildfires wiped out forests out communities, driving people from their homes. Others suffered devastating storms with torrential rainfalls and flooding. Unprecedented cold and power outages plagued Texas in February. December brought recording breaking tornadoes and loss of life.

Coal and Gas

Coal and gas are very bad for climate change. Coal has other disastrous effects from mining to air pollution that causes respiratory diseases, cardiac conditions and brain and nervous system ailments. Many of these impacts disproportionately fall on low-income neighborhoods and communities of color. Gas also creates air pollution and health problems from nitrous oxides, and fracking has additional impacts. Beyond methane escapes, there are earthquakes and ground and drinking water pollution.

Energy as a burden

Aside from externality costs to the environment and people's health, there are other bad impacts. Wisconsin's high utility rates are in part from investing in fossil fuel infrastructure rather than efficiency. High fixed fees also add to the disproportionate costs many low-income customers pay, especially communities of color in Milwaukee whose utility bills are 10% or more of their income – an untenable situation. We have to do better.

Pipelines and indigenous peoples

Our addiction to gas and oil is costly too. Tar sands extraction rips up huge areas of boreal forests which are major carbon sinks, leaving behind decimated, toxic landscapes, causing suffering for indigenous peoples. Transporting tar sands, whether by rail or pipeline, places residents, landowners, and lands and waterways, at risk from toxic spills or even explosions. That includes tar sands Line 5 which goes through Bad River tribe's lands, placing them, and their homes and sustenance at risk.

continued on page 3

investing time, effort, and funds on the 2022 elections, and we'll need all hands on deck. To get involved, please contact Dave Blouin at burroak15@gmail.com.

3. Take more climate action.

The clock is ticking, and our world leaders are not stepping up to the plate like we need them to. So, once again, it falls on organizations like the Sierra Club, and on each of us, to take action to end our reliance on fossil fuels. The Beyond Coal, Tar Sands and Transportation teams are working diligently to move Wisconsin to 100% clean energy and oil-free transportation. Please join them by contacting Cassie at cassandra.steiner@sierraclub.org.

4. Double down on recycling.

Recycling at home is an ingrained habit, but it can be trickier when we're out and about, especially at many events and festivals that take place when the weather warms and the virus's grip weakens. The Four Lakes Group's Recycling Away from Home (RAH) program strengthens recycling efforts at many of these festivals, and we could always use your help! Please contact Don at d_ferber@sbcglobal.net to get involved.

5. Get your shot.

I have been vaccinated and boosted against COVID-19, but I still need to venture forth and get my flu shot. For those who have not gotten the full round of COVID-19 preventative vaccinations, please visit <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/covid-19/vaccine.htm> and make an appointment. We can defeat this if we all work together! Also, to avoid overburdening our health care system this winter, make sure to get your annual flu shot.

From all of us on the Four Lakes Group Executive Committee, have a happy and healthy 2022. Thank you for all you do!

Volunteer Opportunity - Writer/editor

Interested in writing for the Sierra Club and informing people about environmental issues? Consider joining our team to write or edit for our newsletter or blog. Contact Don Ferber at d_ferber@sbcglobal.net for more info.

Transportation boondoggles

Wisconsin transportation climate emissions are on par with those from coal and gas for electricity. Freeways also frequently parted and disrupted communities of color, causing cultural harms and loss of property values. Rates of asthma, cancer and other diseases are also much higher near major freeways, adding to the disparities. Yet the plan to expand I-94 in Milwaukee remains that would exacerbate our reliance on cars, rather than increasing the mass transit those communities need.

Creating change

This past year, our work led to announcements of coal plant closures, and other plants to be taken off of coal. We're also fighting any new fossil fuel infrastructure, whether it be new gas plants or conversion to gas, tar sands pipeline reroutes, or unneeded freeway expansions, and we're lobbying for better utility rates and faster progress on efficiency and clean energy. The time is now to act, so join our Beyond Coal, Tar Sands or Transportation teams to help us accomplish our goals. Learn about our campaigns at <https://www.sierraclub.org/wisconsin>, Issues tab, and make your mark on our clean energy future.

Transit Equity Day – February 4th

On February 4th (Rosa Park's birthday – a civil rights activists who took on bus segregation), activists across the country will call attention to public transit and access to transportation, especially equitable access. Her act of defiance on December 1st, 1965 in Montgomery, AL refusing to sit in the back of the bus, and the ensuing bus boycott, became a spark for civil rights.

Transportation activists today fight for safe, affordable and reliable means of transportation for all. For many, public transit is a necessity, and in Wisconsin's cities, our transit systems can and must do better. People of different abilities or people who can't afford a car or cannot drive need to be able to get to work, go to doctor's appointments, school, or places of worship. Without quality transit service that serves their needs, many people are unable to live full lives.

On Transit Equity Day, ride a bus and show your appreciation for transit drivers, post on social media, or write a letter to the editor. To learn more about Transit Equity Day, go to: <https://www.sierraclub.org/wisconsin/four-lakes/blog/2022/01/transit-equity-day-february-4th>.

In the meantime, Four Lakes Group volunteers continue working to create a model shuttle program to one or more parks.

Garden Expo, February 11th - 13th

At the Garden Expo (see page #) we hope to generate more support for Wisconsin's version of the national Every Kid Outdoors program and let families know how they can take advantage of the ongoing National Parks program.

In the Every Kid Outdoors program, fourth graders and their families can receive a free National Parks park pass. The Wisconsin version, stuck in the Legislature despite bipartisan support, would extend the program to Wisconsin's State Parks.

Join the Equity and Access Team

The Four Lakes Group Equity Access Team meets once a month to work on events, strategies and plans to help improve access in our region. If you are interested, **please sign up via the [meeting link](#) on our [Four Lakes website activities calendar](#)** or contact Liz Wessel, 608-238-9934.

Four Lakes Group Sierra Club Contacts

<http://www.sierraclub.org/wisconsin/four-lakes>
<https://www.facebook.com/4lakesSierraClub/>

Ronda Conner*, Co-Chair, 608-245-3931
rondaconner@hotmail.com

Don Ferber*, Conservation, Outreach, Newsletter, RAH, (608) 217-2959,
d_ferber@sbcglobal.net

Erik Pettersen*, Co-treasurer (608) 515-4426,
erik.pettersen14@gmail.com

Jake Johnson*, (608) 443-6117
jake@paradymeproductions.com

Mary Reames*, Co-Chair (608) 310-3290,
mlreames@sbcglobal.net

Patrick Stoffel*, stpa0001@hotmail.com

Liz Wessel*, Co-treasurer, Climate Crew (608) 238-9934, lizard59sc@yahoo.com

Kathy Mulbrandon, Outings Chair, (608) 215-9706, kmulbrandon@gmail.com



Four Lakes Group Sierra Club
754 Williamson St
Madison, WI 53703
<http://www.sierraclub.org/wisconsin/four-lakes>



Non-Profit Organization
US POSTAGE PAID
MADISON WI
PERMIT #1002

Newsletter Mailing

Our goal is environmentally friendly, cost effective communication with our members. Our primary modes of communication are this newsletter, the Four Lakes Enews, and our web site and Facebook page. If we don't have your email address, we mail you a hard copy – or you can request one. Otherwise, members receive an email letting you know when the newsletter is available to download.

Please consider sending your email address to d_ferber@sbcglobal.net if we don't have it to save paper and the cost of mailing. Plus we can also send you our Enews to keep you better informed.

Volunteer at the Garden Expo February 11 – 13. Alliant Energy Center

Oh to enjoy Spring's lush greenery in February – and in Wisconsin – without traveling to the tropics! Yes, you can go to Olbrich Botanical Gardens' Conservatory, but in 20 minutes, you're done.

A more fulfilling option is attending WHA's Garden Expo at the Alliant Energy Center with 3 full days of exhibits, workshops and demos. Better yet, you can engage with other outdoor lovers at our Sierra Club booth and inform them how they can help explore, enjoy and protect our precious Wisconsin environment.

To plan ahead, check out the Garden Expo offerings at <https://wigardenexpo.com>, decide what you want to take in during the three days, and then block out 2 - 3 hours to volunteer at our booth. All you need is to enjoy engaging with people to find out about their interests and what you have in common – or discover what you can learn from them.

Signing up is simple. Just go to <https://tinyurl.com/pxs9esha> to register and then use the Signup link to choose the shift you want. Consider inviting a friend to join you as well. We'll send you a free Expo pass and instructions prior to the event. Then all you have to do is show up and enjoy the Expo!

Questions? Contact Don Ferber at d_ferber@sbcglobal.net. We'd love for you to join us there.